



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
300 DON GASPAR
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786
Telephone (505) 827-5800
www.ped.state.nm.us

CHRISTOPHER N. RUSZKOWSKI
SECRETARY-DESIGNATE OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

2017 Public Education Department (PED) Preliminary Analysis of Renewal Application (Part B – E)
REVISED

December 4, 2017

School Name: Horizon Academy West (HAW) Charter School
School Address: 3021 Todos Santos NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico
CEO/Principal: Cynthia Carter
Business Manager: Diana Cordova
Authorized Grade Levels: K-5
Authorized Enrollment: 500
Mission: Horizon Academy West has a commitment to educational excellence, and our staff is dedicated to providing a rigorous, creative, well-rounded education for all students. Our school is committed to helping each student master his or her subjects, and learn to think – critically and creatively.

SECTION 1. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Department's Standards of Excellence—A-F Letter Grades

This section includes analysis of academic performance of Horizon Academy West (HAW) towards meeting the Department's Standards of Excellence –A-F Letter Grade System. **Based on the data and the site visit to the school, Part B, Section 1a, Department's Standards of Excellence, A – F Letter Grades, is rated as Approaching Progress.** HAW's performance on each component is compared to area schools within Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and is evaluated over time. HAW's performance was also compared to similar schools statewide. Note that the A-F Letter Grade System used Standards-Based Assessment (SBA) results during 2014, while Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) results was used 2015 – present.

Current Standing. The current standing performance on the School Grading Report for HAW was compared to 4 nearby elementary schools and is presented in Chart 1. HAW's performance compared to the 4 APS schools is as follows:

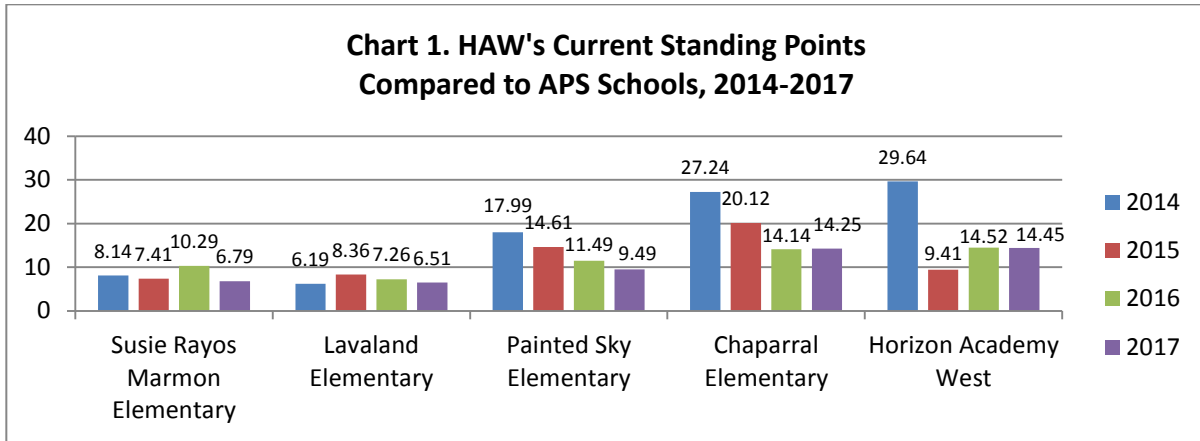
- In 2014, HAW outperformed all 4 schools.

Current Standing

HAW outperformed all local schools most years.

HAW outperformed all schools in the Current Standing component in nearly each year of its contract.

- In 2015, HAW outperformed two schools.
- In 2016, HAW outperformed all four schools.
- In 2017, HAW outperformed all four schools.



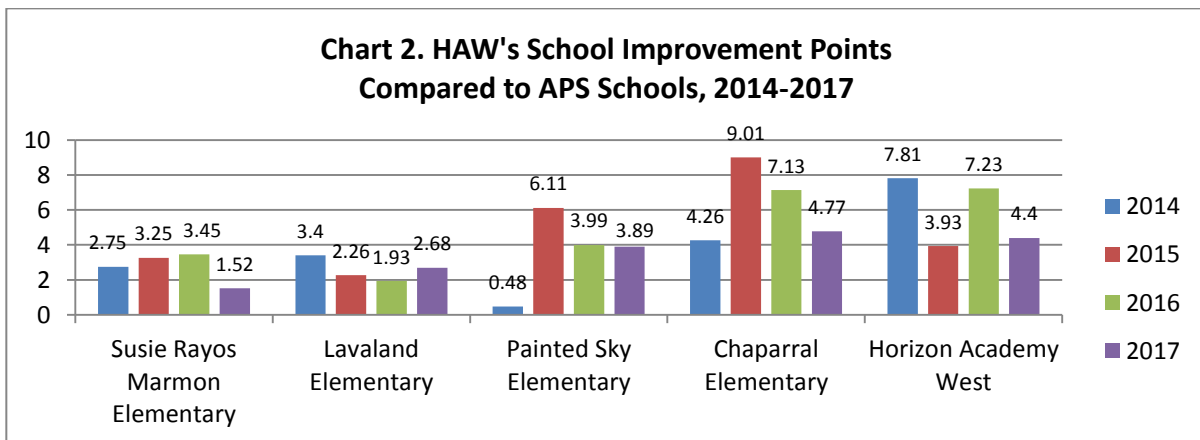
HAW outperformed nearly all the local schools in the Current Standing component almost all of the years of its contract.

However, it should be noted that HAW's performance has declined overall from 2014 and is slightly lower in 2017 than it was in 2016. The school's performance saw a substantial decline in 2015; it has only slightly improved since then. This performance history is the result of a slight increase in both math and reading proficiency from 2015 to 2016 and a slight decline from 2016 to 2017. It also results from inconsistent performance in growth (at the student level in comparison to academic peers) in both math and reading from 2016 to 2017. (See 2017 letter grade report, pages 2 and 3 for more detail)

School Improvement. The school improvement performance (formerly known as *School Growth*) on the School Grading Report for HAW along with schools in APS is presented in Chart 2. HAW's performance compared to APS schools is as follows:

- In 2014, HAW outperformed all four schools.
- In 2015, HAW outperformed two schools.
- In 2016, HAW outperformed all four schools.
- In 2017, HAW outperformed all three schools.

School Growth
HAW outperformed most local schools during some of its contract years.
 HAW outperformed all schools in the **School Growth** component during some of its contract years.

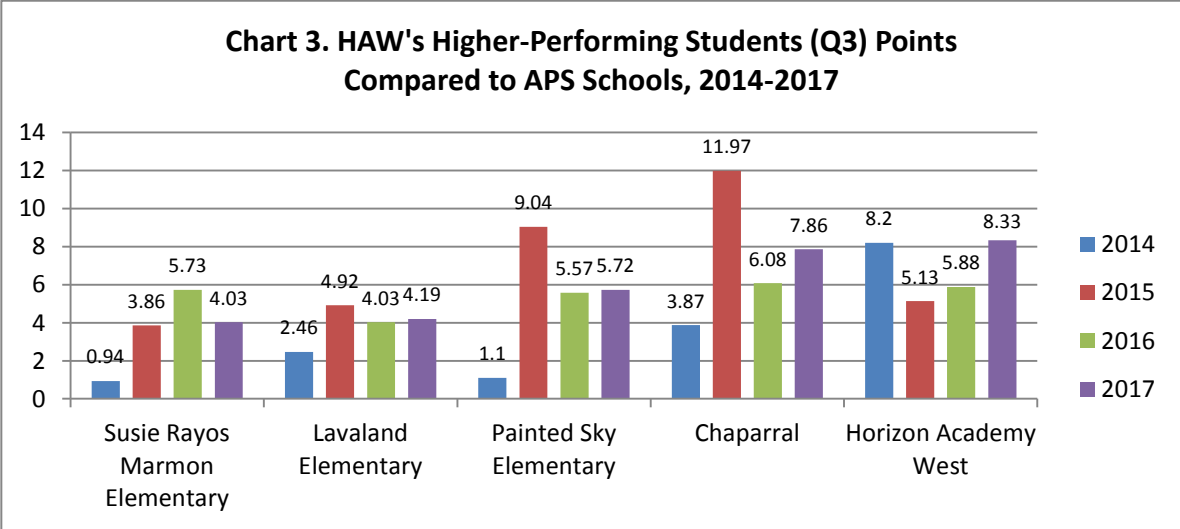


HAW outperformed nearly all the local schools in the School Improvement component in three of the years of its contract. However, it should be noted that HAW’s performance has declined overall from 2014 and is lower in 2017 than it was in 2016. The school’s performance saw a substantial decline in 2015; it has only slightly improved since then. This performance history is the result inconsistent performance in growth (at the student level in comparison to academic peers) in both math and reading from 2016 to 2017. (See 2017 letter grade report, page 3 for more detail.)

Higher-Performing Students. The performance of top three quartiles of students, the higher-performing students (or Q3), on the School Grading Report for HAW along with APS schools is presented in Chart 3. HAW’s performance compared to APS schools is as follows:

Highest-Performing (Q3)
HAW outperformed local schools most years.
 HAW outperformed all schools in the **Highest-Performing** component in nearly each year of its contract. In 2015, however, HAW underperformed by nearly 6 points when compared to the top school.

- In 2014, HAW outperformed all four schools.
- In 2015, HAW outperformed two schools.
- In 2016, HAW outperformed all four schools.
- In 2017, HAW outperformed all four schools.

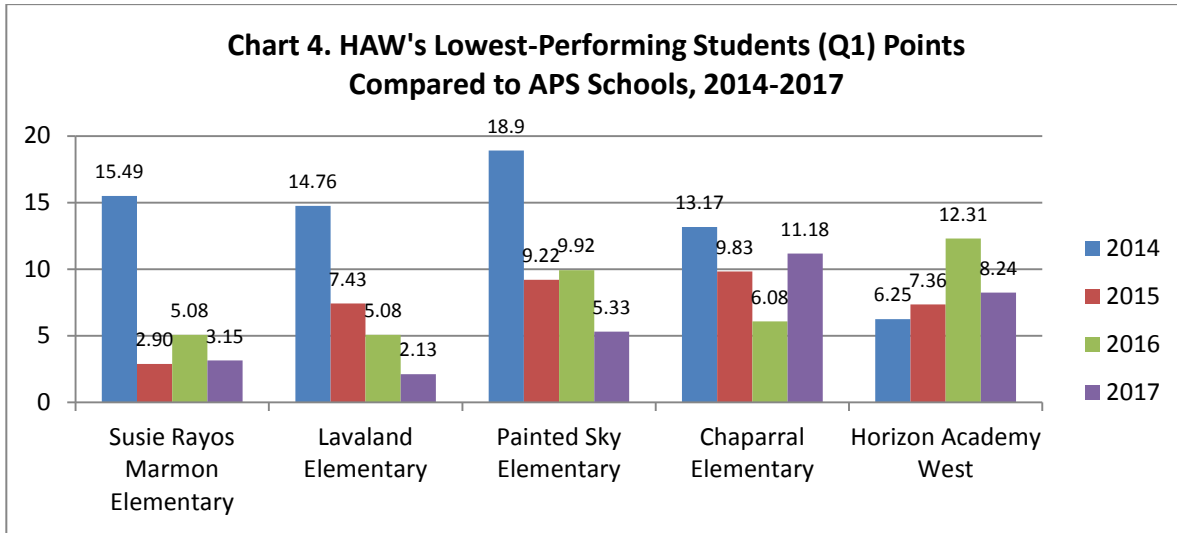


HAW outperformed nearly all the local schools in the Higher-Performing Student Improvement component in three of the years of its contract. HAW’s performance has improved overall from 2014. The school’s performance saw a substantial decline in 2015; it has improved consistently since then.

Lowest-Performing Students. The performance of the bottom quartile of students, the lowest-performing students (or Q1), on the School Grading Report for HAW along with APS schools are presented in Chart 4. HAW’s performance compared to APS schools is as follows:

Lowest-Performing (Q1)
HAW had mixed performance compared to local APS schools.
 HAW performed well during the last 2 years, but was outperformed in the first 2 years of its contract by nearly 13 points compared to the top school in 2014.

- In 2014, all APS schools outperformed HAW.
- In 2015, three APS schools outperformed HAW.
- In 2016, HAW outperformed all four schools.
- In 2017, HAW outperformed all three schools.



In the last two years of its contract, HAW has outperformed nearly all the local schools in the Lowest-Performing Student Improvement component. HAW’s performance has improved overall from 2014. The school’s performance saw a substantial increase in 2016, which was not sustained. Pursuant to the charter renewal rubric (p.15), the narrative identifies measurable successes resulting in improvement actions over the contract term, but the successes are inconsistent and not maintained over time. Thus, the school’s performance history has been inconsistent on growth (at the student level in comparison to academic peers) in both math and reading from 2016 to 2017. (See 2017 letter grade report, page 3 for more detail.)

Comparison Schools Ranking in Most Recent Year (2017). This analysis also includes a comparison of HAW’s performance on the A-F School Grading Report in relation to similar schools statewide.¹ The cluster of schools in which HAW was compared to in 2017 totaled 134 schools. **Among similar schools to which it was compared, HAW ranked below average (the 50th percentile) in the bottom half on all indicators.** See Table 1 below.

	Current Standing	School Growth	Highest-Performing	Lowest-Performing	OTL	Graduation	CCR
Percentile Rank	40 th	33 rd	30 th	34 th	21 st	N/A	N/A
Rank Order <i>(Out of 134 schools)</i>	79th	86th	94th	86th	97 th	N/A	N/A

To further illustrate HAW’s performance in each indicator relative to the 134 similar schools statewide to which it was compared, see Chart 5 below.

¹ Similar schools are determined based on the demographics of the schools. The analysis uses the percentage of students that are mobile, English learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, African Americans, Hispanic, and Native Americans. School clusters also include only school that serve the same grades. SAM schools are also evaluated separately.

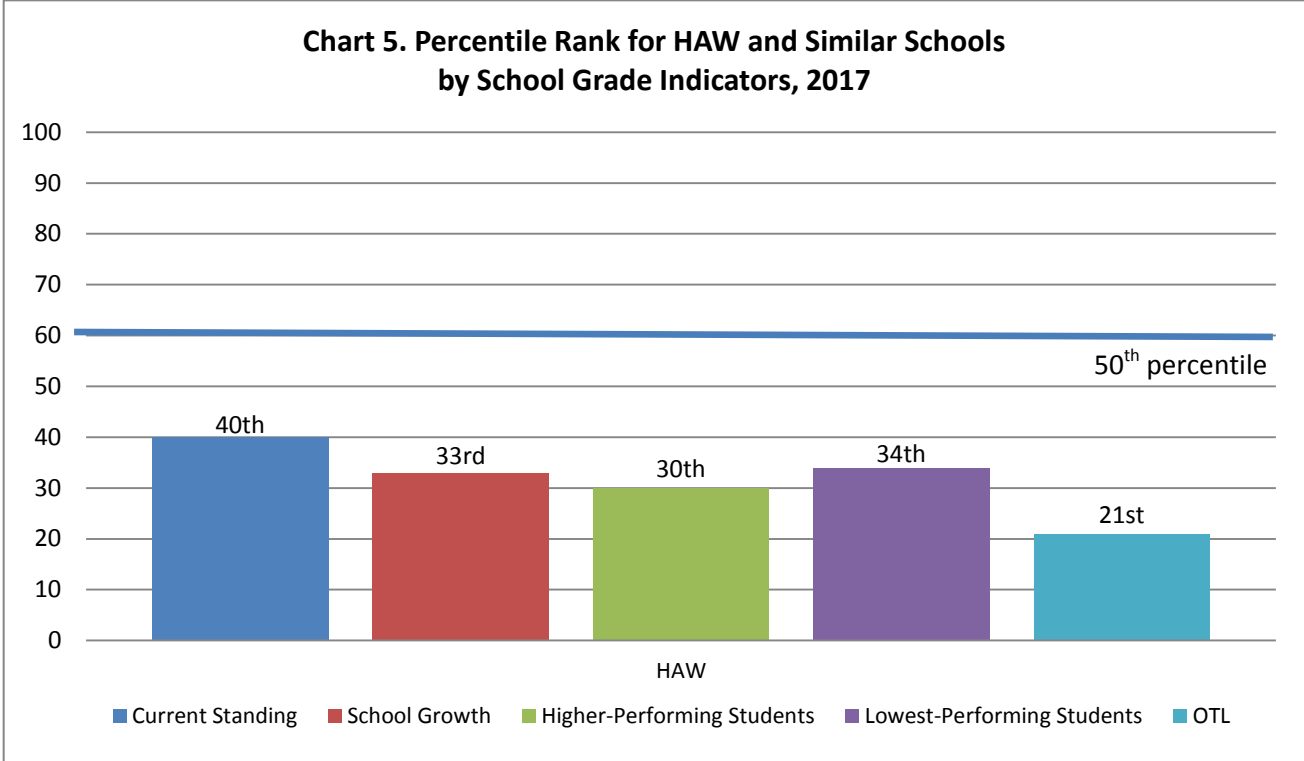
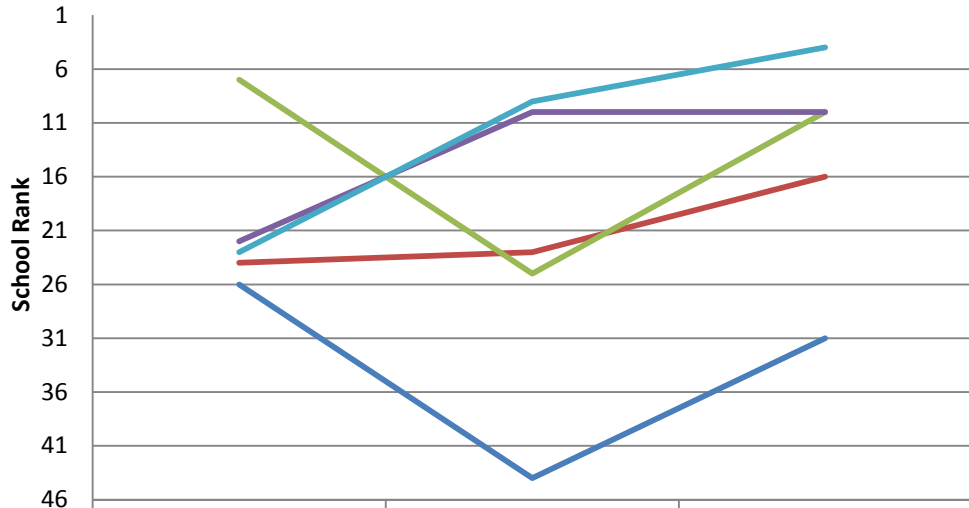


Chart 5 clearly illustrates that in 2017, HAW scored below the 50th percentile in each of the school grade indicators. HAW’s performance is below average.

Below, Chart 6 demonstrates HAW’s performance relative to similar schools for the years 2014 through 2016. Since in those years, the cluster size was approximately 46 schools, those results and rankings are shown separately from the 2017 results.

Chart 6. HAW's Similar School Rank by School Grade Indicator, 2014- 2016



	2014 (46)*	2015 (46)*	2016 (45)*
Current Standing	26	44	31
School Growth	24	23	16
Higher-Performing Students	7	25	10
Lowest Performing Students	22	10	10
Opportunity to Learn	23	9	4

*The number of schools in the comparison cluster.

Taking Charts 5 and 6 together, HAW’s performance when compared to similar schools has been inconsistent over time, trending downward. The school’s overall reading and math proficiency remains low (see page 2 of the school’s 2017 school grade report) and growth for the lowest-performing students has not markedly improved over time, resulting in the school to experience less growth than expected and earning an F (far below the state average) on this indicator (see page 3 of school’s 2017 school grade report).

**HAW Compared to Similar Schools
In 2017, HAW ranked below the 50th
percentile in all categories.**

HAW has ranked in the bottom half of schools to which it is compared over the last 4 years.

HAW’s narrative in the A-F Letter Grade section of the Renewal Application included an analysis of surrounding schools (Chaparral, Christine Duncan, La Promesa, Painted Sky, Lavaland, and Susie Rayos Marmon) some of which were included in the PED analysis. Two of these schools, which HAW included in its own analysis, serve grades K-8. HAW compared total A-F School Grading System points across all 4 years (2014-2017). Consistent with the PED analysis provided (but drilling-down into each category), HAW’s total points exceeded the majority of schools in the surrounding area.

Summary: Department's Standards of Excellence – A-F Letter Grades

HAW discussed activities it purportedly took to improve student achievement during the 2014-2015 school year when it received a school letter grade of "D." In its response, HAW stated that it developed and implemented a *"School Improvement Plan which was then updated for the 2016-2017"* school year—a year in which the school also received a school letter grade of "D" (Renewal Application, p. 20).

In its narrative, HAW described *"areas needing improvement and actions taken in response to the Final School Grades of D in 2015 and 2017"* along with a response to indicators that *"received a grade below C [i.e., within the School Grading System]"* (Renewal Application, p. 20). Some of the actions taken by HAW include:

- *"...Governing Council and leadership applied for and received a second-year K-3 Reads to Lead Grant for school year 2015-16"* (p. 23).
- *"...Horizon Academy developed a comprehensive 2015-16 School Improvement Plan with five areas of focus"* (Ibid).
- *"...targeted professional development to maximize instructional effectiveness for all students"* (Ibid).
- *"...Teachers also participated in scheduled professional development with John Kongvik, Education Consultant. Topics focused on Engaging Students with Content, Language and One Another"* (p. 24).
- *"...The school purchased the Primary Phonics Program" due to lack of "resources to support units in the School's Balanced Literacy Program"* (Ibid).
- *"...Administration required lesson plans to reflect implementation of the My Math curriculum..."* (p. 25).
- *"...The School continued a Response to Intervention [RtI] daily 30-minute block in the school calendar addressing both areas of reading and math"* (p. 27).

HAW points out that the ultimate outcome of many of these target strategies implemented after the school received an overall school letter grade of "D" in 2014-2015 was a school letter grade of "C" in 2015-2016. The school also points out that it lost the *"Reads to Lead Grant"* (p. 31) funded instructional coach during the 2016-2017 school year which it believed positively impacted student performance. When the school letter grade for 2016-2017 was released, HAW leadership implemented similar steps it took at the end of the 2014-2015 school year when it failed to meet the Departments Standards of Excellence benchmark of at least letter grade of "C."

During the Public Education Department (PED) site visit that took place October 11, 2017, the PED team visited over 20 classrooms and observed in each one for approximately 15 minutes, interviewed students, parents, governing body member, and teachers as well as reviewed documents. Items listed below are example of evidence that was validated during the site visit:

- In one kindergarten classroom room, leveled reading books were used by students. Team members noted that the school has a leveled book room with boxes of leveled books.
- Purchase Orders (POs) in the amounts of: \$7,841.24 and \$4,114.70 to bolster materials for the book room were reviewed.
- PO for the Primary Phonics Program was reviewed.

- Grade level agendas were provided in binders and reviewed.
- PO for My Math was reviewed.
- In several classrooms, PED team members noted that teachers implemented small group instruction. In a 4th grade classroom, for example, students were observed working in small groups as well as collaboratively to complete work on possible science test questions regarding the plant and animal cells.
- During interviews with the school leader and students, it appeared that the school offers before and after care programs and that the school offers evening events. For example, a number of students spoke about attending “C.R.E.W” after school.
- Sign-in sheets for the before and after care programs and evening events at the school were observed.
- Attendance records for summer school program were also observed.

HAW’s narrative described “*specific adult [teachers, leaders, board] actions taken to improve performance and outcomes by addressing root cause*” (Renewal Application, p. 15) of low student performance as indicated by the school’s letter grade of “D” during the 2014-2015 school year which it raised the following year to a “C.” The narrative also provided specific evidence that the PED site visit team was able to review and confirm. Nevertheless, the school does not have a demonstrated record of meeting all standards in each of the contract term and while the narrative identifies some measurable success resulting from the actions over the contract term, the success is inconsistent, trending downward. Thus, the data and evidence does not fully support the reported successes over the contract term. Consequently, the rating for **Part B, Section 1a, Department’s Standards of Excellence, A – F Letter Grades, is rated *Approaching Progress*.**

School Specific Charter Goals

This section includes analysis of HAW’s performance on its school specific charter goals during the course of its contract (excluding the final year). HAW has 2 mission-specific indicators focused on reading and math. Below are description and analysis of each indicator:

Mission-Specific Indicator 2.a

All students in grades Kindergarten-Sixth at Horizon Academy West will apply strategies and skills to comprehend information in reading that is read, heard, and viewed; as assessed through the Discovery Education Short Cycle Assessment.

Analysis. HAW stated that it had “*met or exceeded all school-specific charter goals included in the school’s performance frameworks for each year of the charter term*” (Renewal Application, p. 39). The school presented its analysis of performance from 2014-2017 on the Discovery Education Assessment showing that it met or exceeded the indicator rating of “*Meets Standard.*” The school, however, received a “*Does Not Meet Standard*” rating (from the PED) during the 2015-2016 school year for the indicator because the “*PED found that 23 of 415 total students or 56% failed to meet 5% growth*” according to the Department’s analysis. The following year, the PED rating for the indicator was “*Meets Standard.*” Note that the school provided data to support its contention that it met the indicator during

each year of its contract during the site visit held October 11, 2017. The school stated that “in 2015-16, 85% of students performed as average or above average and in 2016-17, 86% of students performed as average or above average” (p. 44). The PED concurs with the school’s analysis.

Mission-Specific Indicator 2.b

All students in grades Kindergarten-Sixth at Horizon Academy West will apply strategies and skills to comprehend information in math that is read, heard, and viewed; as assessed through the Discovery Education Short Cycle Assessment.

Analysis. HAW stated that it had “earned an ‘Exceeds Standard’ rating for math performance in each of the three years [of its contract excluding the final year]” (Renewal Application, p. 45). The PED concurs that the indicator was met each year from 2014-2017.

Summary: School Specific Charter Goals

It is evident in the narrative and through the site visit that the school met its mission-specific indicators. In each year of the contract term, the school had demonstrated a record of meeting all standards, which were supported by evidence. Consequently the rating for the **Part B, Section 1b, School Specific Charter Goals, is “Meets Standards.”**

School Goals

HAW met mission-specific goals.

The school met or surpassed its mission-specific indicators of the term of its contract.

SECTION 2. FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK

Audit. HAW described audit findings it received in FY14-FY16 and improvement actions it had taken to avoid repeat findings. During the site visit on October 11, 2017, the PED team:

- Reviewed all new staff files and observed cleared background checks for each one. A new staff checklist completed by the office manager was included with each file.
- Reviewed an e-mail sent to all HAW staff from the head administrator reminding them of school policy to submit all cash to the office on a daily basis to ensure timely deposits to the bank.
- Reviewed a number of vendor files (3 total) and observed purchase order dates that were generated prior to invoices received.
- Reviewed governing board minutes during the last 3-months and observed inclusion of Budget Adjustment Requests (BARs) with specific number identification.
- Reviewed and observed a pledge collateral for the schools bank account.

The school described specific adult (teachers, leaders, board) actions taken to improve performance and outcomes and the narrative identified specific evidence the PED site visit team were able to substantiate. Consequently, the rating for the **Financial Compliance, Subsection a, is “Demonstrates Substantial Progress.”**

Financial Performance Framework. During the 2015-2016 school year the school received a “Does Not Meet” rating due to a “misunderstanding” when it “did not specifically address a required indicator questionnaire” (p. 55), The questionnaire for the following year 2016-2017 was completed and submitted into web-EPSS resulting in a “Meets Standard” resulting in a non-repeat of the issue. The school described specific adult (teachers, leaders, board) actions taken to improve performance and outcomes and the narrative identified specific evidence the PED team were able to substantiate through desktop monitoring. Consequently, the rating for the Financial Compliance, Subsection b, is “Demonstrates Substantial Progress.”

Board of Finance. HAW’s Board of Finance was never suspended during the term of its contract. Consequently, the rating for the Financial Compliance, Subsection c, is “Meets Standard.”

SECTION 3. CONTRACTUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Charter Material Terms. The school met all material terms (which it described in the Renewal Application beginning on page 62) in its contract since the 2013-2014 school year and did not need to address any items in this section of the application. During the renewal site visit held October 11, 2017, some items that the PED team observed related to HAW’s material terms were:

- Small group instruction during a “reading block” in at least 2 classes that were observed.
- At least 3 classes provided opportunity for students to “use technology” that appear integrated into the classroom lessons aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
- 4-day instructional week verified through schedule and interviews (students, parents, and teachers).
- Afterschool and summer programs verified through schedules as well as student/parent interviews.

Consequently, the rating for the Charter Material Terms, Subsection a, is “Meets Standard.”

Organizational Performance Framework. HAW provided a narrative to describe efforts it has made and/or will continue to make in order to improve on items identified as “Does Not Meet Standard” or “Falls Far Below Standard” in the Organizational Performance Framework section of its 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Performance Framework as identified in web-EPSS reports. Examples of items that were rated below standard are as follows:

- In 2015-2016, Section III-A.03: Educational Plan—“The CSD noted that one IEP received from another school had not been accepted or modified within the 30-day timeframe. Additionally, one IEP did not have parent signatures.”
- In 2015-2016, Section V-A.01: Governance and Reporting—“CSD noted that the Governing Council did not provide the Director’s annual performance evaluation.”
- In 2016-2017, Section III-A.01: Educational Plan—“The CSD noted that the instructional hour review indicated the school was not meeting the instructional hour and re-reporting requirements of the performance framework.”

- In 2016-2017, Section III-A.04: Educational Plan—*“The PED team noted that Home Language Surveys (HLS) were missing from two files. Five files were missing the W-APT or other screener results (i.e., scores) required when a student’s HLS indicates a language spoken in the home other than or in addition to English.”*
- In 2016-2017, Section IV-A.00: Business Management and Oversight—*“The PED has rated this indicator as ‘Working to Meet Standard’ because the school was cited with one rating of non-compliance on the FY2016 Audit. The school has provided documentation including a letter from the PED’s Audit Bureau confirming that a Corrective Action Plan was received and reviewed, demonstrating movement toward compliance with law.”*

The school’s responses in this section (e.g., resubmittal of instructional hours to the School Budget and Finance Analysis Bureau to include previously excluded breaks/recess and completion of the head administrator’s annual evaluation by the school’s governing board) described specific adult actions taken to improve performance and outcomes (e.g., updated 2017-2018 school calendar check form and non-repeat of special education related finding from the 2015-2016 school year). The narrative identified specific evidence that the PED site team was able to verify during the October 11, 2017 visit to the school. Items observed by the PED team include:

- Pledge collateral statements and reconciliation documents along with correspondence e-mail with the PED Audit Bureau confirming remedy of finding (dated July 5, 2017).
- Student cumulative files that show Home Language Surveys (HLSs) with accompanying screener scores (if applicable) in select files that were reviewed in addition to written procedure on proper identification of English Learners.
- E-mail correspondence with the PED business analyst assigned to HAW showing re-submission of revised instructional hours/school calendar for 2017-2018 (dated July 10, 2017).
- PED audit Bureau letter confirming that the FY16 Corrective Action Plan (CAP) showing “no further action” needed after HAW sufficiently addressed findings (dated September 5, 2017).

Although the school provided documentation that the governing body had met to evaluate the school administrator during both years as indicated in board minutes the evaluations themselves were not uploaded into the web-EPSS. The school also provided a STARS report countering re-current enrollment that was not met during the 2016-2017 school year which was also a STARS generated report specifically showing recurrent enrollment from one year to the next. Consequently, the rating for the **Organizational Performance Framework, Subsection b, is “Demonstrates Substantial Progress.”**

Governance Responsibilities. The PED has received documentation that the four of the current five governing body members have completed their required training for FY2017. All other board members completed the required training hours in FY2016 and FY2015. The PED does not have training documentation for Carlos Tenorio, who has been on the board since 2015, but has since resigned. As of September 19, 2017, Christen Hagemann was voted onto the board, but to date has not attended a new governing board member training or has filed and received approval for a virtual class in order to maintain compliance with 6.80.5 NMAC .Consequently, the rating for the **Organizational Performance Framework, Subsection c, is “Approaching Standard.”**

PART C: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The school completed Section IX of the *Charter Renewal Application Budget Analysis*. A response was required as per NMAC 6.19.8.10 which states that governing bodies of charter schools must prioritize “resources of a public school rated D or F toward proven programs and methods linked to improved student achievement.” Because HAW received a school letter grade of “D” twice during the term of its contract it was required to provide a response. Examples of activities it has and will continue to undertake to improve student academic outcomes are as follows:

- “...8K was used to purchase computer lab with chromebooks and cart.”
- The school has “focused on building a leveled library with leveled readers.”
- The school “used \$22k to purchase research-based curriculum of My Math with manipulatives and Primary Phonics”
- The school “purchased Istation Indicators of Progress [ISIP] for reading and math grades K-5.”
- “Professional Development for teachers has been budgeted \$17K.”

The school provided a description of activities (see above) that prioritized improvement of instruction that appear compliant with Section 22-2E-4 NMSA 1978.

PART D: PETITION OF SUPPORT

HAW provided both petitions that appear to reach at least 65% (employees) and 75% (households).

PART E: DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITIES AND ASSURANCES

The school provided a narrative description of its facilities. The school also attached required documents that appear to place it in compliance with Section 22-8B-4.2 NMSA 1978.

PART F: AMENDMENT REQUESTS

The school did not submit an amendment.